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Fourth Step : Saul's Sons ; Numbering of the People.

1. **The Execution of Saul's Sons:*** Study 2 Sam. 20, 21, and (1) consider the date of this event in view of the fact that it must have occurred (a) after David became acquainted with Mephibosheth (ch. 9 : 1 seq.), but (b) in view of chs. 16 : 7, 8 ; 19 : 28, before Absalom's rebellion ; (2) Explain how the nation should be suffering famine because of the sins of Saul committed years before ; (3) Explain why Saul's sons, who are not accessory to their father's crime, should be put to death in order to atone for that crime ; (4) Explain why this incident is not related in 1 Chronicles ; (5) Consider whether the execution of Saul's sons would establish David more firmly upon the throne.
2. **Numbering of the People :** (1) Study 2 Sam. 24 † (2) Read the parallel account in 1 Chron. 21 : 1-27 ; (3) Divide the passage into four divisions, viz : vs. 1-9, 10-14, 15-17, 18-25 ; (4) Master thoroughly the details of the case ; (5) Consider whether there was any sin in the taking of the census (compare Exod. 30 : 12-14) ; (6) If not in the taking of the census, in what did it consist ? (7) What is the evidence for the view that a military armament was intended with a view to foreign conquests ? (8) Explain why so many people should have been punished for a sin committed by one man ; (9) Why did "David's heart smite him" ? (9) Consider the passage in its relation to the topography of Jerusalem.

Fifth Step : David's Thanksgiving ; His Last Words.

1. **David's Psalm of Thanksgiving** (ch. 22) : ‡ Consider (1) the circumstances under which the psalm was written (v. 1) ; (2) The introductions to similar songs (Exod. 15 : 1 ; Deut. 31 : 30) ; (3) The general relation of the chapter to Psalm 18 ; (4) the many small variations between the two chapters ; (5) The question whether the psalm or the chapter in Samuel is the original ; (6) The inferences to be drawn from all this concerning the text ; (7) The thought of the various sections, viz : vs. 2-4, 5-7, 8-16, 17-21, 22-25, 26-28, 29-31, 32-37, 38-43, 44-46, 47-51 ; (8) The relation of the contents to the circumstances under which the psalm arose.
2. **David's Last Words** (2 Sam. 23 : 1-7) : (1) Take up each verse, and try to indicate its thought ; (2) Put the whole into a connected statement which shall include the essential thought ; (3) Formulate the prophetic element in the passage ; (4) Compare this with the thought of 2 Sam. 7 ; (5) Compare also Micah 5 : 2 ; Ps. 72 : 1-3 ; Isa. 11 : 1-5 ; Zech. 9 : 9 ; Jer. 23 : 5 ; 33 : 15 ; Ps. 72 : 6 ; Mal. 4 : 2.

STUDY XIX.—DAVID AND HIS REIGN.

- Remarks :** 1. It now remains, before leaving the period of David, to group together the material as it is connected with the great character of the times, *David*.
2. In this work, much help may be gained from reading the articles on *David*, in Encyclopedias and Bible Dictionaries and from monographs like *David, King of Israel* (Harper and Brothers) by Wm. M. Taylor ; *The Life of David* (MacMillan) by Alex. Maclaren.

* Cf. especially Kirkpatrick's 2 Samuel, pp. 234, 235.

† Kirkpatrick's 2 Samuel, p. 238.

‡ Kirkpatrick's 2 Samuel, p. 235 seq.

*First Step: David's Preparation and Qualifications.**

1. Recall the facts of his *home-life* as a *Shepherd*, so far as they are given, and (1) Show in what respects this life would be a training and preparation for his great life-work; e. g., the opportunity it would furnish for calm thought and deep reflection; (2) Endeavor to find in his later life and writings traces of the influence of these early years.
2. Review the details of his life at *Saul's court*; (1) Indicate the temptations to which he must, of necessity, have been exposed; (2) Show as a matter of fact, how these were withstood; (3) Point out the value of such a discipline as a preparation for his later work, training him, as it did, in self-control and generosity.
3. Review, now, the period during which he was an *outlaw*; (1) Show the temptations which must have beset him in this life; (2) Account for his alliance with the Philistines against his own countrymen; (3) Decide whether this period really marks a retrogression in his life and character; (4) Show, however all this may be, how his bandit-life furnished a necessary kind of training; e. g., (a) developing sympathy with the oppressed; (b) increasing his knowledge of men; (c) furnishing an opportunity for practice in the art of ruling men.
4. Consider now (1) David's qualification as a ruler thus acquired, and as manifested in his life as king; (a) his person, as adapted to the life of a warrior; (b) his natural ability as a ruler; (c) his courage; (d) his personal magnetism; (e) his trust in God; (f) his consciousness of his divine commission; (2) The evidence furnished that he was a popular ruler; (3) The explanation in view of all this of the temporary success of Absalom's rebellion:† (a) Absalom's personal popularity; (b) Judah's dissatisfaction at her loss of preëminence; (c) Benjamin's desire to regain the headship; (d) the national jealousy between the North and South.

Second Step: The Kingdom as David found it.

1. Recall the reign of Saul; (1) its lack of organization; (2) its lack of strong, aggressive effort; (3) the many disturbing elements; (4) the sudden and disastrous close.
2. Try to picture to yourself in view of this the condition of things when David took the throne: (1) Was there any civil or religious organization? cf. the time of Samuel's organization. (2) The country was practically in the hands of the Philistines, the inveterate enemies of Israel. (3) Every effort toward organization would be opposed not only by the Philistines, but by all the surrounding nations.
3. Remember, too, (1) that all the friends and retainers of the old dynasty would, at least, secretly oppose any movement on the part of David looking toward an establishing of his position as king; and (2) that there existed many tribal jealousies and antagonisms which would make it extremely difficult to secure concerted effort in regard to any measure.
4. Put all this together and try to realize, at least in some sense, the *condition of things* at the time when David came to the throne.

* See Kirkpatrick's 2 Samuel, Introduction, chap. V.

† Kirkpatrick's 2 Samuel, Introduction p. 36.

*Third Step : David's Reign.**

Divide his reign into three parts and in review consider briefly each period.

1. **David, king of Judah :** Make out a list of important events of the period during which David was king of Judah, giving especial attention to the following points : (1) David's message to the Gileadites (2 : 5-7) ; (2) Ishbosheth made king of Israel (2 : 8-11) ; (3) The war between Israel and Judah ; (4) The story of Asahel (ch. 2) ; (5) Abner's proposals to David (ch. 3) ; (6) Abner's death (ch. 3) ; (7) Death of Ishbosheth (ch. 4).
2. **David, king of all Israel (first period) :** Get an idea of the consecutive events in David's life from the time of his becoming king of all Israel to the capture of Rabbah (12 : 26-31), giving especial attention to the following points : (1) The capture of Jerusalem (15 : 4-16) ; (2) The removal of the ark (ch. 6) ; (3) The promise of everlasting dominion to the house of David (ch. 7) ; (4) David's foreign conquests (ch. 8) ; (5) His fall and punishment (chs. 10-12).
3. **David, king of all Israel (second period) :** (1) Gather together the leading events in the reign of David from the time of the outrage committed by Amnon to the time of Sheba's insurrection, giving especial attention to (a) his treatment of Absalom when he had fled from home (chs. 13, 14) ; (b) the details of Absalom's rebellion (chs. 15-18) ; (c) the details of the restoration (chs. 19, 20) ; (2) Consider the relation of all these facts to the future attitude of Israel and Judah.

Fourth Step : The Results of David's Reign.

While a full appreciation of David's reign can only be obtained after a careful study of all succeeding Israelitish history, it is possible to see almost at once certain great things accomplished. These have been summed up by Kirkpatrick† under four heads :

1. **The consolidation of the tribes** into a nation ; the unifying of what had been discordant elements ; the unity not one of long duration, yet one the force and influence of which continued long to be felt.
2. **The acquisition of the territory**, for which Israel had long fought ; a possession " indispensable for the expansion and development of the nation and through it of the true Religion which had been entrusted to its guardianship."
3. **The union of all the good influences** at work in the nation ; religion and politics united, the king the representative of Jehovah, and responsible to his will as revealed by the prophets.
4. **The furnishing through his reign of a type** for the great reign of the future ; David's reign was regarded as the *golden age* and formed the basis of the hopes and prophecies of the Messianic reign which was to come.

Fifth Step : David's Character.

1. Consider the instances which show the force and influence of his character and life over others, e. g., (1) Saul's daughter loving him unasked ; (2) the friendship of Jonathan ; (3) his sway over the outlaws ; (4) the yielding of the priests even to his desires ; (5) his dealings with Abigail ; (6) his relations to the king of the Philistines ; (7) Saul's confession when he (Saul) comes into his presence ; (8) the loyalty of certain subjects in the time of the rebellion.

* See Kirkpatrick's 2 Samuel, Introduction, ch. VI.

† Kirkpatrick's 2 Samuel, Introduction, chap. VI, p. 39.

2. Consider the points of character revealed in (1) his relations with *Absalom* (contrast the relations of Saul and Jonathan); (2) his relations with *Joab*, his general; (3) his connection with *Ittai* (2 Sam. 15: 19-22); (4) *Zadok and Abiathar* (2 Sam. 15: 24-29); (5) *Shimei* (2 Sam. 16: 5-14; 19: 16-23; 1 Kgs. 2: 8, 9); (6) *Barzillai* (2 Sam. 17: 27-29; 19: 31-40).
3. Consider (1) the varied character of his life as shepherd, minstrel, warrior, free-booter, poet, statesman, prophet, priest (for, though not a priest by descent, he performed priestly functions), king; (2) the contradictory elements in his make-up,—“passion, tenderness, generosity, fierceness;” (3) in a word, the striking feature of his character,—*its many-sidedness*.
4. Compare with him from different points of view other great characters in biblical and profane history.

STUDY XX.—THE TIMES AND REIGN OF SOLOMON. 1 KGS. 1-4;
8-11.*

Remarks: 1. In this “study” let us take up again the method employed in our work upon 1 Samuel.

2. We are approaching the end of an important period. To gain a comprehensive grasp of it, as well as to be prepared to appreciate the period which follows, we must try to preserve the connection between all that has gone before and that which is now to follow.
3. For general reading consult (1) the commentaries on the chapters cited; (2) the article on *Solomon* in Smith's Bible Dictionary; (3) Stanley's History of the Jewish Church, 2d series, Lecture XXVI; (4) Geikie's Hours with the Bible, Vol. III, chs. xiv, xv, xvii; (5) *Solomon, his life and times* (Farrar).

First Step: General Study.

1. **First Reading:** Study (with note-book and pencil in hand) 1 Kgs. chapters 1: 1-11: 43, and write down as you go along, the main points of the story, e. g., (1) David's old age; (2) Adonijah's attempt and Solomon's coronation; (3) David's last charge concerning the law and concerning certain individuals, and his death; (4) the fate of Adonijah, Abiathar, Joab, Shimei; (5) the vision at Gibeon; (6) the two women; [(7) the preparation for and building of the temple;†] (8) dedication of the temple; (9) second vision of Solomon; (10) building of cities, etc.; (11) the Queen of Sheba; (12) troubles which threaten the peace of the kingdom; (13) the death of Solomon.
2. **Second Reading:** Study again, (1) correcting or improving the work done; (2) gaining a still greater familiarity with the material; (3) indicating in connection with each point the verses which treat of it; (4) comparing in a general way the parallel accounts in 1 Chron. 29-2 Chron. 9.
3. **Résumé:** Take up the points or topics one at a time, and, *in thought*, associate with each all the details of the narrative which connect themselves with it. If necessary, read the chapters a third time; but do not be satisfied until the entire material is firmly grasped.

* This “study,” so far as concerns material, follows closely Professor Beecher's “study” on the same subject in THE OLD TESTAMENT STUDENT, Vol. VII, p. 122 seq.

† This will furnish the basis for the study of the next lesson and may be omitted here.